

Maria Assumpta Parish

BEACH HAVEN



1972

GOLDEN JUBILEE

2022

October 22-24, 2022

Souvenir Booklet



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF AUCKLAND

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Maria Assumpta Parish - Golden Jubilee Message

Dear Parishioners of Maria Assumpta,

Congratulations on achieving the half century as a parish. As you will know, Bishop Pompallier dedicated the Church that would develop in Aotearoa New Zealand to the protection of Mary assumed into Heaven when he first celebrated Mass in this new mission at Totara Point on the Hokianga River in January 1838.

This was clearly not just a passing thought for him. The beautiful church at Motukaraka, just down river from Totara Point, was dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption, and so too was the historic church at the Port of Onehunga in Auckland itself.

The patronal name of your parish builds on this tradition and reminds us that Mary continues to support us as we seek to serve her Son and long for the day when we will be able to follow where she has gone before us.

Your parish has produced a host of leaders for the Diocese: men and women serving as diocesan staff and on diocesan councils. You have been pioneers in lay involvement, conscious that if you did not take up the challenge of sharing Faith with children, caring for the poor in your suburb, working ecumenically with other Christian denominations, participating in adult Faith Formation opportunities, and creating beautiful liturgies, the witness to Christ's abiding presence in our midst would wane.

Thanks for all you have achieved over the past 50 years. May the next 50 be just as richly blessed.

+ *Patrick Dunn*

✠ Patrick Dunn
Bishop Emeritus of Auckland
May 2022

Maria Assumpta Parish

Golden Jubilee 1972-2022

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Maria Assumpta Parish at Beach Haven has been a parish in its own right since 1972. But its colourful history goes back many years before that.

A parish characterised by a strong community spirit and now a multicultural diversity, it is used to having to take care of itself much more than most other parishes.

Until 1919 Beach Haven was part of the widely spread parish of Devonport, at first served by priests from St Patrick's Cathedral, then later by its own priest.

In 1916 an old district hall in Northcote was converted into a church. The parish of Northcote was established in 1930, and priests from there served the area of Beach Haven.

Masses were held first in a fruit shed near the corner of Lancaster and Beach Haven Roads, then in the back of Dean's store at Beach Haven Point, near the wharf and where the reserve is today. This hall at the back of the store was called Dean's Cabaret.



Lil Turner

Memories

Lil Turner remembered when she first came to Neptune Avenue. The Tanners (senior) lived on the point with their two children, Alan and Yvonne. They lived in cottages on their parents' property after they were married.

The Netzlers bought their property in Neptune Avenue in 1942, but used it mainly as a holiday place until 1960 when they moved in permanently. It was a casual mention by young Charlie Netzler to Phil Turner, a school mate (at Sacred Heart, Ponsonby), as they spent happy Sea Scout days messing around in boats, coming across from Cox's Creek to the bay below the Netzlers' property that there was a section going for sale over the road from his parents, that sent the Turners across the harbour to buy the property.

The Reids (Frank and Shirley) and the Baileys (Sheila and Noel) were living nearby. Sheila Bailey's father was Hunter, the traffic cop, feared by all. They would go

down to Mass in Dean's Cabaret and have to sweep out the cigarette butts and open the windows to get rid of the stale smell of beer and cigarettes before Sunday morning Mass.

Fr Maurice Hunt (parish priest at Northcote from 1936 to 1949) used to say Mass once a month. Fr Frank Terry took over the role at Northcote, acting there from 1949 until 1963. When confessions were heard in Dean's Cabaret, Fr Terry sat on a chair with a sack hung in front of him and the penitent kneeling on the other side of the sack.

Sections in Tramway Rd were going for 36 pounds at the time.

Long-time parishioner Jimmie Merz (from April 1950) used to make two sponges every month for church fundraising, one to eat/share at the morning teas, and one to raffle.

In 1957 a three and a half-acre property (the Costello property) was bought by the priest in Northcote for 300 pounds (equal to about \$16,000 in 2022), the sale approved by Archbishop Liston. There was an old cottage on the property and after interior walls were removed by Mr Dopheide and Mr Dijkman, with the help of John Foster, it became the church and meeting place and



Jimmie Merz



The cottage that served as church and meeting place



Sharron Peters

was used for the celebration of Mass.

Sharron Peters (nee Kennedy) was a niece of the Costellos and remembers spending holidays with her aunt Marie (who married Frank Costello) and uncle in what she calls the “farmhouse”, and when she came to live in the parish she would often dream away during Masses about the Masses held in the old house during those holidays.

Shirley Reid (Frank was not a Catholic until he became one 18 years after they were married) used to get a ride with Mervyn Bates who lived further up Rangatira Rd, whose wife Grace was also not a Catholic, and this pair with their young families were regular attenders in the early days. Many people presumed they were married to each other and got quite a shock when they discovered they each had spouses at home.



Cyril Jarden

Historic meeting

Despite the area not being a parish of its own, there was a strong community spirit in the area, and a local committee was formed in March 1966. Cyril Jarden chaired the meeting and Tom Cotter was co-opted as secretary.

Fr Philip Purcell, parish priest of Northcote, and 46 parishioners were present. Fr Purcell called the meeting “historical” as the parish of Northcote was to be divided into four areas: Northcote, Beach Haven, Glenfield and Albany.



Fr Purcell

One of the main reasons for dividing it was to organise it for planned giving, but as Beach Haven had its own church property at 38 Puriri Rd (now renamed 198 Beach Haven Rd) it was appropriate for it to be a separate area. The motion was put and carried “That Beach Haven be established as a separate area in the parish”.

At a subsequent meeting a committee was established – not just, as Fr Purcell wanted, to organise a planned

giving campaign, but also “to investigate what further activities could be undertaken for the area”.

A committee was formed: Chair, John Ryan; vice-chair, Cyril Jarden; secretary, Tom Cotter; and 14 others. Names like McKinley, Sean Barrett, Barry Smith, John and Marie Dijkman, Ian Sharkey, Sylvia Prangley and Margaret Jarden were on this committee.



John Ryan

Two further activities planned were laying paths around the church (still the old house) and running morning teas. At subsequent meetings, items discussed were letting the section for horse grazing, selling the trees on the property for cash, and bees in the old building.

Mass centre proposed

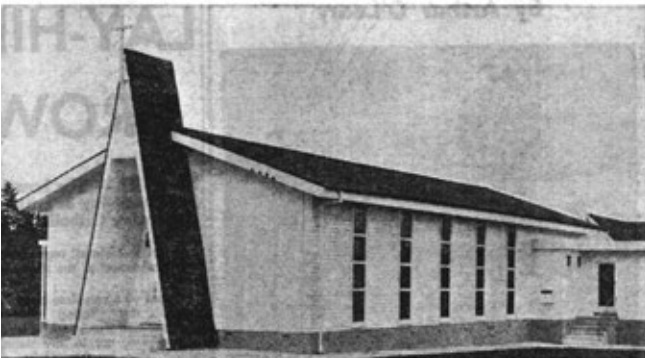
Plans for a Mass centre, which was to be a church hall which could be used as both – quite radical for those times! – were presented at the April meeting.



Tom Cotter

Fr Purcell at a later meeting presented a different plan. No fewer than four general meetings were held for parishioners between March and July 1966. The idea of a multi-purpose building was dropped and a church similar to that just completed at Orewa agreed on, as the amount

New church at Beachhaven



The new church at Beachhaven, Northcote parish, opened on May 7. It seats 230 people and cost £8000.

Photo in *Zealandia* – £8000 would now be worth \$334,500



Beach Haven Catholics at the church opening

of money the diocese would lend for the area was smaller than first thought.

The church was built and opened on May 7, 1967, by Archbishop Liston. The “steering committee” disbanded but at a meeting held in August parishioners resolved “That a permanent committee, to be elected annually in a general meeting, and consisting of the president, vice-president and six committee members (at least two of whom should be ladies) be formed”.



Archbishop Liston speaking to Fr Purcell

This committee was to assist the parish priest and serve the needs of the parishioners for the Beach Haven area, especially in the following:

- organising ushers, readers and collectors for Masses (also choir if necessary)
- cleaning and maintenance of church and grounds
- visiting new arrivals
- assisting with pledge follow-up if required
- organising social functions. (picnics, barbecues, morning teas, etc.)

These early committees set a foundation upon which the parish was based.

Families linked

There were many village-like interlinks between families in the area. For instance, Lyn Cotter's mother was a girl of 12 on the ship coming out from England, which also carried John and Marie Carolan and their baby daughter Monica.



Lyn Cotter

Lyn's mum was often used as baby-sitter for Monica, and the connection continued after landing although Mrs Cotter lived in Belmont and the Carolans in Devonport at that time. Lyn remembers attending John and Marie (nee Carolan) Dijkman's wedding in Devonport.

Lyn and Tom's family continued these connections. Marie married a Webster, and Richard married Joanne Moore, daughter of Ralph and Angela (nee Martin) and became proud parents of Victoria, who was baptised on April 20, 1997.

Tom also shared a great-aunt, Mrs Skinner, with George Dickson.

The Shaws also had links to the Martin family, Michael being married to Alison. The Balls and the Verryts were linked, with Kathy (Jenny Verryt's sister), married to Valentine Ball. Later Joy Ball married Sid McCann, linking those families also.

And Philip Seyb married Helen Martin, providing yet another part to the network. The Martin family all settled together in Beach Haven – Patrick and Joy, and their children Angela (married to Ralph Moore), Patsy (married to Stephen Phillips), Jan (married to Ernie Thomas), Victor and Michael.

In the 1970s Maria Assumpta was served by a priest who typically gave a homily “which one needed to go home and read a dictionary to understand”, according to a view from the pews.

During one of those sermons – decrying what a wicked world it was, and how there was nothing good at all in society, and only prayer and fasting would redeem it – parishioner

John Ryan created a memorable moment in parish annals when he stood up in his pew and said he had never heard such rubbish or such a negative outlook.

He said he wasn’t staying to hear any more, so he strode out carrying one of his children, leaving his wife Jan to sit out the rest of the Mass.

What is thought to have been the first wedding in the newly opened church was that of Wally and Netta Blaikie’s daughter Christine to Keith Ballantyne on November 18, 1967. Another of the early weddings in the new church was of Jeanette Foster to Tom Pendlebury in 1971.

John Dunleavy (Trish Broadley’s dad) for years acted as altar server to the priests who came from Northcote to Beach Haven. They would pick him up on their way past his home.

Separate CCD

In June 1968 Fr Purcell pointed out that the increasing number of Confraternity of Christian Doctrine students was overtaking facilities at Northcote School where classes were held on Monday nights. It was resolved “That commencing in the third term 1968 Beach Haven opens as a separate CCD area within the parish using the Beach Haven School classrooms, should permission be given” (it was).

Classes were to be held on Tuesday nights, so that Fr Purcell could attend. **(See article on page 42)**

In 1970 a report was received from the North Shore regional meeting where the parish delegates were Pat and David Lythe. They brought news of a house-to-house Laity Commission consultation to take place in the near future throughout the diocese.

From July to October house meetings were held in various homes around the parish to bring forward remits to the bishop on a variety of matters.

In October, it was agreed that house meetings be held to

discuss the functions and composition of a Beach Haven parish council. Stephen Jarden and a delegation of youth requested support to set up a Young Christian Students group.

First parish council

On November 8, 1970, the first meeting of a parish council (as distinct from a committee) was held. Fr Purcell and 26 parishioners attended.

The following council was elected for one year: Chair, Ian Sharkey; vice-chair, Barry Smith; secretary-treasurer, Pat Lythe; committee, Laurie Bates, Matt Reidy, Noeline Cotton, Cliff Money, John Ryan, Mr O'Connell, Mr Whitta, Jenny Tanner. Any groups operating in the parish were to have ex-officio membership of the council.

In early 1971 the idea of having one council for the three satellite communities (Northcote, Beach Haven and Glenfield) was discussed, but shelved in the meantime.

The council grappled with such weighty problems as "the New Mass" and what form the "kiss of peace" should take. After an hour's discussion (and three resolutions), families were detailed to do both the collecting and the Offertory procession. Tongs were to be provided "for hygiene reasons to transfer hosts from basket to ciborium".

It was mentioned that women readers were now approved. This would be publicised. Brian Pranglely was put in charge of the readers. Ray Tanner was the parish organist.

At the November 1971 annual meeting, John Ryan was elected to the chair. New names on the council were Frank van Wayenberg, Foss Jury, Marie Dijkman, Margaret Lavey, Janice Bates, Kath Sharkey and Mary Woods.

A petition was presented by Lisa Leydon and 49 others to keep guitar music at one of the Masses. This came about after a time of tension between organists and those who wanted guitars.



Ian Sharkey



Brian Pranglely

The function of a parish council was put in a nutshell by Fr Purcell who said the function was to care for PEOPLE.



Fr Jillings

The old house (now the parish hall) was being used for baling paper, which ladies of the parish did faithfully every week as parishioners brought their papers down to Mass on Sundays. It was falling further and further into disrepair.

A separate parish

In January 1972 it was announced that Beach Haven was to be a parish in its own right. Fr Harry Jillings would be the first parish priest, but would live at the Northcote presbytery. Mass times were to be 7am and 9am in summer, 8am and 10am in winter.

Consideration had to be given to the building of a presbytery. Training was given to readers, and those taking part in Offertory processions. Beach Haven's own second collection was to be recorded and counted separately (John Dunleavy to be the recorder).

In March new directives came out from the diocese about parish councils. Fr Jillings was of the opinion that the council was already in accord with the guidelines. All that remained was to set up the standing committees.

These were established: Religious education, youth, liturgy, mission and overseas aid, finance, works and maintenance, and social service and welfare. A total of 31 people were involved in these committees.

Later in the year Margaret Lavey got a youth club off the ground on a Friday night, with games. It had to close its membership later in the year with a roll of 90.

A new parish priest

At the end of the first year, Fr Jillings decided the parish was a bit too young and energetic for him, so in 1973 a new parish priest, Fr Frank McHale, an Irishman and



Margaret Matthews and her husband, Warren, were married in Maria Assumpta Church on May 6, 1972, with Fr Purcell officiating at the Nuptial Mass. The first wedding in the new parish, it is No. 1 in the marriage register. Margaret's parents were Stan and Betty Hoare, who lived at the top of Onewa Road. Margaret, along with her sisters, attended St Mary's School, then St Dominic's College. Margaret's mother was a foundation pupil of St Mary's and continued with an active interest all her long life.

a diabetic, was appointed. He started off living at Northcote, but wanted to be “on-site” and started to bach in the sacristy, stowing a stretcher in the confessional, and installing a phone and electric cooker.

However, after taking on his brother's teenage children (and their dog) for a spell, the space became a little cramped and the urgent need for a presbytery became obvious. A loan was obtained from the diocese and a prefabricated house was purchased for \$11,500 and shifted on to the land in October.

But it was put on the wrong site and had to be shifted, then sewerage connected, paths laid, etc. It was not completed until late December, when Fr McHale's health was not equal to the task and he was transferred to the cathedral.

While Maria Assumpta was still to be a parish in its own right, in 1974 it was served by Fr Jack Lyons, parish



Fr McHale with First Communicant Caroline Anderson in 1973

priest of Northcote, and the curates there (Frs Kevin Fitzgerald, Denzil Meuli and John McAlpine) in the meantime. The new presbytery was to be rented out.

At the parish annual meeting 11 persons were elected to the council, with Trevor Clarke as chairperson. In July the average pledge totalled \$72 a week.

A letter of congratulations was sent to Bishop Reginald Delargey on being made Archbishop and Metropolitan of New Zealand. This meant he transferred to Wellington. Barbara de Jong and John Dijkman attended Bishop John Mackey's installation.



Fr Jordan

Guerrilla leader arrives

There was no sign of a parish priest until it was reported in the December 8, 1974, *Zealandia* that Fr W. Jordan had been appointed.

Fr Jordan was well known to many as a Second World War guerrilla leader, Major Bill Jordan, who fought a four-year campaign behind enemy lines in Greece and France. He entered the priesthood as a late vocation but was hampered by being run down by a car in Auckland city.

Fr Jordan moved into the presbytery. The property then had to be fenced and later in the year the drive was concreted.

David Lythe and Fr Jordan conducted a training course for CCD teachers and 10 new teachers were recruited.

Fr Jordan suggested an altar to Our Lady as well as a change of name for the parish to Our Lady of the Assumption. Discussions raged around the placement of the altar. Onehunga was already named the parish of the Assumption, but proceedings began to change the name anyway.

There were 106 families pledging an average of 75c per family per week. The valuation of the church was \$32,500 and the presbytery \$14,700.

Bishop Mackey's call for lay people to get involved in all aspects of parish life was brought back from the Regional Pastoral Council.

At the 1975 annual meeting on June 22, which 34 parishioners attended, those elected were: Chair, Arthur Rutter; secretary, Anne Shaw; councillors, Henk Aalders, Alan Concannon, Clinton Ridling, Brian Prangle, Frank van Wayenburg, Tony Popplewell, Phil Pinto and Gary Merrylees.



Arthur Rutter

A discussion on Saturday evening Masses was held. A census was attempted, but only 90 forms were returned.

First Communion investment

Janny Mannes was sent to a CCD course at Palmerston North. That investment was well worth while as Janny became the mainstay of the First Communion preparation for some years.



Janny Mannes

Pat Lythe was appointed as North Shore regional representative to the Diocesan Pastoral Council.

An overhead projector was purchased to replace hymn books and Mr and Mrs Aalders donated an electronic organ to the parish.

Fr (Major) Jordan coached (drilled) the congregation well in the right ways to receive Communion in the hand. His procedure for going up to Communion was followed for many years.

Mona McManus was thanked for her services as organist. John van Ryn called an inaugural meeting to set up the Rangatira Scout group.

When Fr Jordan's gammy leg caused him too much pain for him to remain in this hilly parish, Fr Nick Alleman was appointed parish priest in 1976. In his two years, he visited almost every home in the parish.

In 1976 an annual picnic and open-air Mass began at Tui Park. CCD classes changed from Tuesday night to



Fr Alleman and the 1976 First Communion class

Sunday morning at Beach Haven School, with the lesson time shortened from one hour to 45 minutes.



Clinton Ridling

Planting trees around the church was carried out, and a census in co-operation with other churches was undertaken.

Back to Maria Assumpta

The name of the parish reverted to Maria Assumpta and a trial of Saturday evening Masses began.

The new parish council was: Chair, Arthur Rutter; vice-chair, Brian Prangle; secretary, Anne Shaw; councillors, Angela van Wayenburg, Henri Schreuder (youth), Anne Banse, Nell Schreuder, Clinton Ridling (finance), Marie and John Dijkman, Phil Pinto (mission and overseas aid), Gary Merrylees (religious education), Florence Farnworth (social service), Henk Aalders (liturgy), Bruce Douglas, Alan Concannon, Frank van Wayenburg, Barry Smith (works and maintenance).

Fr Alleman spoke about a growth in spirituality for councillors, as Bishop John Mackey wanted, but there was disagreement about introducing spiritual reflection into council meetings (mutters about waste of time...). Six

months later meetings began with a half hour of spiritual reflection.

A seminar on vocations for young people was held and parish leaders attended a course at Takapuna to prepare for Confirmation later in the year. The first regional forum with Bishop Mackey was held at Takapuna.

After a discussion about finance for needy people, a St Vincent de Paul group began in 1977.

Following a successful pledge campaign, investigations began on the possibilities of: a) building a new hall; b) moving the existing church, converting it to a hall and building a new church; or c) raising the existing church and building a hall underneath.

After a confused time of discussion on April 3 an extraordinary general meeting of parishioners was held in the old hall. It resolved: "That the parish council get plans drawn up for the shifting of the church and repositioning as a hall, and a sketch plan of a new church be drawn up. This information to be put to the parish and a special committee be formed then to take action on it. This to be done before the AGM in June 1977."



Fr Ivan

Pine trees planted

Pine trees were planted on the parish land to raise money for a new organ. The first Samoan Mass was held. A youth forum was held in the old hall, and senior youth afternoons in the hall became popular with 20-30 attending. Young mums met together. There was a farewell morning tea for the Jury family.

On May 1, 1977, the 10th anniversary of the church was celebrated.

Fr Ivan Lunjevich was appointed parish priest in 1978 and remained until 1981. Mrs Rona O'Shea was his housekeeper.

The Daughters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul moved into Glenfield and Sr Gabrielle Whiteley started at Beach

Haven in April (supposedly working only two days a week for the parish).

Birkenhead Council condemned the old hall as unsafe. Discussion took place on the possible future division of the Auckland diocese.

Fr Eugene O'Sullivan visited to train readers and talk about liturgy. Prayers of the Faithful were prepared by the liturgy committee or readers from this year.

The parish was involved in widespread discussion of the Johnson Report on health and social education, and regionally and at diocesan level about how to respond to the shortage of priests.



Sr Gabrielle

Parish centre planned

A parish centre was planned and meetings held with an architect. The building committee was John Dijkman, Foss Jury, Greg Smith and Kath Sharkey. Fundraising bottle drives were organised by Sean Barrett.

Paul Barrett received a Rotary award for his work with youth.

The 1977 annual meeting was delayed until November. It was held in the Anglican Hall and 55 parishioners attended.

Those elected were: Chair, Arthur Rutter; secretary, Melanie Brierly; family life and social action, Nell Schreuder; finance and works, Greg Smith and Kevin Schreuder; liturgy, Marie Dijkman; mission and overseas aid, Kath Sharkey; youth, Paul Barrett; CCD, Steve Martin; also Ray Anderson, Trish Barr, John Dijkman, Pat Lythe (regional), Marie Cole, Sharron Peters, Sylvia Prangle, Foss Jury.

Marie and Don Cole, and Stan and Phil Pinto moved from the parish.

During 1979 the second Mass was changed to 10.30am to accommodate CCD teachers and classes which met at Beach Haven School between 9.15am and 10am.

Parish centre opened

The parish centre was built for \$76,000 (including the parking area). The opening was tied in with Confirmation. In October the parish council met for the first time in the new hall.

Thanks went to George Dickson for painting the hall, Steve Crilly for electrical work, Angela Moore and her sisters for wall papering, Bernie and Sid McCann for curtains, and Arthur Rutter for devotedly supervising the whole project.

The old Costello house, which had served the parish long and well, was demolished.

A letter of appreciation was sent to Bishop Mackey for Sr Gabrielle's work, and the bishop wrote re the falling Mass count (by 1980 it was 380 over three Masses – considered very low for a city parish).

Cards of welcome were also sent to new parishioners (the Enrights were very grateful).

A North Shore regional training course was run for CCD teachers. First Communion was held on a Saturday, not a Sunday.

Christmas trees were sold outside the church for \$5 each. Most of the pine trees were cut down and sold, raising \$2895.

Those elected at the annual meeting in November were: Chair, Ralph Moore; the Corbetts (family life and social action); Fred Aull (finance, works and maintenance); Marie Dijkman (liturgy); Sr Gabrielle and Colleen Hounsell (adult education); Steve Martin (education for Christian living); Steve Crilly (St Vincent de Paul); Kevin Schreuder and Jim McManus (youth); Patsy Phillips (newsletter); Roald Bjerga, Suzie Boggs, Tom Cotter, Margaret Lavey, Anne Shaw and Pat Lythe.

After Fr Ivan fell ill twice, Fr Jim Shanahan relieved from April till June. Miraculously, Fr Ivan was well enough to celebrate his silver jubilee with the parish in July 1981.



Ralph Moore



Fred Aull

Tape mornings on a programme by Fr John Powell were held; 43 parishioners were in Scripture groups; and a planting plan was co-ordinated by George Enright.

Those elected to the parish council in 1982 were: Chair, Pat Lythe; secretary, Joh Cogle; Colleen Hounsell, Anne Shaw, Barry Smith, Ralph Moore, Margaret Lavey, Maree Lochhead, Suzie Boggs, Kevin Schreuder, Jim McManus, Isabel Taylor, Fred Aull and Robin Steedman.

As she walked around Beach Haven, Sr Gabriel sometimes had to refuse hopeful approaches from male admirers.

One offered her a lift up Eskdale Rd and as they drove along he mentioned that he needed a partner for a company dance.

“Don’t worry about the habit,” he said. “I can get you a really stunning dress for the night.”

Sr Gabrielle leaves

The parish was devastated to hear that Sr Gabrielle was returning to Australia – her “walking nun” stories had appeared everywhere in the media. She had been such a source of inspiration in the parish and area, walking everywhere, talking to people, following children in St Mary’s uniform home from school to find people not known before, winning the hearts and minds of young and old alike. A huge farewell to Sr Gabrielle was held on February 21.

Sr Olive Mangan took over from Sr Gabrielle. Then in the middle of the year Fr Ivan was too sick to carry on, and Fr John van Tilborg, a red-headed Dutch Mill Hill priest, just retired from work as a Maori missionary, became parish priest.

After a period of adjustment on both sides, Fr John settled in, giving the parish its longest period of stability since it began. Fr John was “semi-retired” – which meant he entrusted lots of the running of the parish to the laity, who were well used to it, having provided the continuity through the first four years of stop/start/different priests every year, and had just settled down with what seemed to be a long-term appointment with Fr Nick Alleman when he was whisked away after only two short years.

Fr Ivan’s illness had marred his longer term, but Fr John stayed for ten and a half years, taking frequent sabbaticals but always returning, and with the assistance of pastoral workers like Srs Celine Quadros and Val

Cullen, Daughters of Charity, then Mercy Sr Helena Hotchin, and lastly Marist Sr Celine Sinclair and consistent parish council membership with several committees operating (although some waxed and waned), the parish at last matured.

Faith education develops

The years 1982-92 saw a process of development in faith education, from CCD (now called ECL, Education For Christian Living), which had been for years the main educational endeavour of the parish, through to the beginning of children's liturgy for pre-schoolers in 1982 and the start of a consistent RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) programme in 1983.

Confirmation programmes every three years, run by parishioners themselves and attended by large groups of teenagers with camps at Loreto Hall and Carey Park, led into a consistent youth group programme run on Friday nights by Bill and Jenny Verryt, assisted at various times by Trish Barr, Norman McCann, Malcolm Steedman and youth leaders Prue and Peter Webster, Jo Moore, Wendy Simpson and Bernette Peters among others.

A parish profile was prepared in 1983 in preparation for the visit of Bishop Denis Browne. At that time there were three Sunday Masses with an average attendance of 385-400.

Weekday Masses averaged 25; there were 380 families on the parish roll; there were 38 Confirmations, five funerals and six marriages in the year, and the ethnic groups in the parish included Maori and Samoan as identifiable groups with small numbers of other cultural identities. The CCD roll had dwindled to 60.

In 1984 the Scout den was built on the property and the Oruamo scheme also took off. This was a Maori development project using the parish land for horticulture and other purposes.



Sr Olive



Fr John



Sr Val



**Sr Celine
Quadros**

Many parishioners involved

In 1985 a survey of parish ministries showed that more than 140 parishioners were taking part in some ministry.

The Renew programme began in September in the parish and around the country. A full team of 13 organised this and 12 small groups were involved for the whole five sessions concluding in 1987. As part of the Renew process an open forum was held in the parish in 1986.

Two busloads of parishioners travelled to the Auckland Domain for the visit of Pope John Paul II in November 1986.



Barry Smith

In the same year Barry Smith, a foundation member of the parish, had a massive heart attack and required a heart transplant. The parish assisted in fundraising to send Barry and his wife Elaine to Sydney for the operation, with the youth group staging a bike-a-thon to Hamilton and car washes at Verrans Corner.



Youth group members on their Hamilton bike-a-thon. Participants were Nigel Smith, Marie Lewis, Chris Verryt, Matthew Lythe, Matthew Rutter, Paul Stanaway, Anthony Cotton, Morris Pita, Kyle McGovern, Kevin Schreuder, Peter Webster and David Sharkey.



First Communicants in 1986

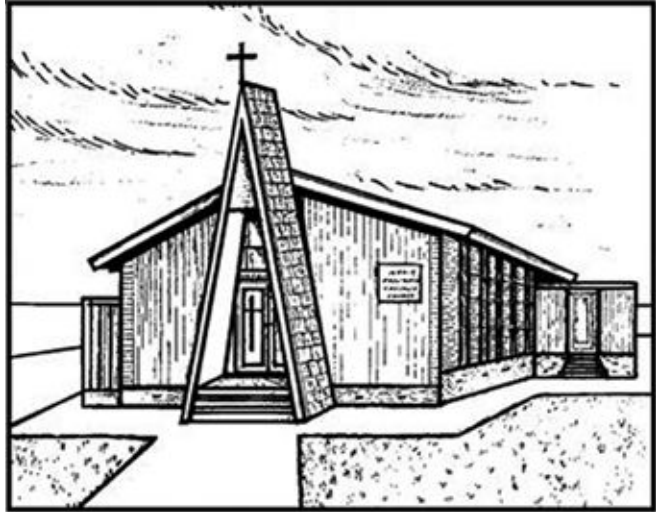
In 1987 the Daughters of Charity withdrew from parish work to concentrate on working with the homeless, after giving nine years of service to the parish.

Fr John celebrated the 40th anniversary of his ordination and his brother Henry, a priest in the Philippines, came to help him celebrate.

From 1987 adult candidates and catechumens were received into the Church through the RCIA process. These included Lyn Reid, Kathy Ball, Patrick Martin, Lei Makene, Justine de Laurier, Malcolm Steedman, Simon Fraser, Chris Simpson, Stephen Lane, Denise and Hillary Anderson, Sue Dorman, Kathy Ball (sister-in-law to the previous one), Shahnaz and David and Vic Peters.

Goings on and gossip

From 1988 until 1990 a little magazine called *Assumptions* appeared, full of fascinating snippets of gossip from Winifred Weasel – guess who? (a clue: her initials were P.M.B.) – and interesting tales of goings on in the parish as well as a children's page and parish directory. Alas, the news was too hard to dig up for the magazine to continue.



The drawing of the church which still features at the top of the parish bulletin was drawn by George Daly. This picture was used on greeting cards the parish sent out to parishioners on special occasions.

In 1989 the parish sent Suzie Boggs (now McCarthy) and Chris Verryt as their representatives to the diocesan synod, having engaged in the two sessions of small group programmes and a huge open forum to look at remits and vote for their representatives during that year.

The three-session baptismal preparation programme had been run by parishioners during these years. Different people shared the responsibility, in particular Malcolm and Robin Steedman. Janny Mannes and Angela Moore served many years in the preparation of First Holy Communion candidates.

In 1990 CCD finally came to an end after 22 years, the numbers attending having dwindled to almost none. However during the same year a new initiative, Bible Club, began on Thursday afternoons after school. This was planned to meet the same needs – faith education for children not at Catholic schools. However it proved popular with children from Catholic schools too.

In 1992 one of the Steedman twins, Craig, was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident. The parish rallied prayer support and his recovery is recognised as a medical miracle.

Fr John retires

Fr John announced his retirement from full-time ministry at the end of 1992 and a huge farewell was organised for him in February 1993. Samoan and Tongan groups took part in the celebration.



Te Aorere Chan

In 1993 Fr Chris Brady became the new parish priest. His arrival coincided with an increase in the number of new migrants settling in the area, people from different lands like Iraq and the Philippines. Sr Celine visited them and with the help of Cecilia (now Te Aorere) Chan soon involved them in the life of the parish.

At the same time a group of parishioners did the Maori theology course with Pa Henare Tate and invited him to help them practise for a full Maori Miha (Mass). The group practised hard for about six months before their first Miha in May 1994. Since then a Maori Mass has been celebrated whenever there is a fifth Sunday in the month.



Pa Henare

Cultural concerts, mystery bus tours and dinners took us into 1995 when in June Fr Michael Gormly, a Columban, came to the parish.

That year Jimmie Merz, whose beautiful floral arrangements had adorned the church for so many special occasions, flew off to Tahiti on the Women's Peace Flight to protest against French nuclear testing.

At the end of the year three announcements were made – Bishop Denis was to transfer from Auckland diocese to Hamilton, with Bishop Pat Dunn named as the new Bishop of Auckland, and Fr John Dunn was to be Beach Haven's new parish priest.



**Fr Michael
Gormly**

Bishop Denis' loss was keenly felt, as he had made many warm pastoral and sacramental visits to the parish

during his term as bishop – visiting the sick, going to North Shore Hospital on one occasion to visit Joan Cory, and confirming a sick Tania Hambrook at home on another.

A new Fr John

Our new Fr John was a lecturer in systematic theology at the Catholic Institute of Theology and at the national seminary, and came to the parish on the understanding that he would be a part-time pastor, taking time to devote to his other role.

In fact he gave more of his time to pastoral duties than he expected, for which the parish was very grateful, but during his semester visits to the seminary at Mosgiel the parish coped just as it always did.



Fr John Dunn

Again the growth in multicultural diversity continued to enrich the life of the parish. On the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14, 1995, a special feast day for the Iraqi community, they celebrated after Mass by leaping over a blazing fire, and then sat the parish down to an amazing meal.

St Celine became ill at the end of 1996 and had to withdraw from her role as pastoral worker, but continued to live and convalesce among us.

Following the silver jubilee celebrations in 1997, Fr John continued as parish priest until the end of 2002. During this time, he was often away teaching at the seminary in Mosgiel, leaving the parish in the safe hands of the people with supply priests coming in for Sunday Masses. Fr Michael Gormly was again with us for six months in 2001.

Parishes share resources

In 1998 Bishop Pat launched a pastoral planning process called “Shaping Our Future”, in which parishes and communities began to evaluate their position and look



Parishioners on the 1998 Hikoi of Hope

to a time when greater co-operation and collaboration of clergy and lay people would be necessary.

The first stage involved asking parishes to form “pastoral areas” – i.e. groupings of neighbouring parishes which might share resources. Beach Haven teamed up with Northcote and Glenfield (its original connection).

This meant the priests of these parishes would preside at Sunday Masses in the other parishes once a month and the parish councils would meet together to plan to share resources such as RCIA, sacramental preparation, training for ministries, etc.

Fr John and the parish priests of Northcote, Fr (now Monsignor) David Tonks, and Glenfield, Fr John Bland, IC, were enthusiastic about the process and fully engaged. A pastoral area initiative arising out of this collaboration was the All Souls Day service at the Schnapper Rock Road cemetery. **(See article on page 49)**

In 1998 a parish group travelled to Wellington on the Hikoi of Hope, an Anglican initiative to draw the attention of politicians to concerns over unemployment, housing, health, etc.

In 2002 the remains of Bishop Jean Baptiste François Pompallier were returned to Aotearoa New Zealand from France and were taken on a nationwide pilgrimage before being re-interred at Motuti in Te Tai Tokerau. Maria



Fr David



The parish hosted Bishop Pompallier's remains in 2002

Assumpta was one of the Auckland parishes privileged to host his casket overnight in the church.

At the end of 2002 Fr John told us he was to move to St Heliers parish, as getting over the bridge in the mornings to lecture at Good Shepherd College was challenging. It was decided that our two neighbouring pastoral area parishes, Northcote and Glenfield, would supply us with Mass, and there would be no resident priest.



Joan Wells

At that time the parish decided to appoint Joan Wells as parish pastoral co-ordinator. Joan had been parish pastoral council chair and knew the parish and the way it operated well. Seeing that the presbytery was no longer required for a priest, it was agreed that Joan would move in so as to be better able to co-ordinate parish affairs.

Pastoral area in action

This worked well in 2003 and 2004. The pastoral area arrangement continued with priests from Glenfield presiding at the Sunday Mass on the third Sunday of the month, and those from Northcote serving on the first, second and fourth Sundays, plus weekday Masses from Wednesday to Friday at 9.15am. Pa Tate presided at the Maori Miha on the fifth Sunday of the month.



Anita Knape

The Northcote clergy were Fr David, Fr Ivan Lunjevich and Fr Iosefa Euse. Fr David (as parish administrator) coached three lay people, Anita Knape, Malcolm Steedman and Joan Wells, and they were allowed to preach every five weeks on a Sunday, and more frequently during the week.



Malcolm Steedman

In 2003 Bishop Pat launched the diocesan pastoral plan “That You May Have Life: Kia whai oranga ai koutou”, with an update in 2007-2009. A new diocesan pastoral plan, “Fit For Mission”, was launched at Pentecost 2014, urging people, parishes, schools and communities to look beyond themselves and reach out in witness and service.

Halfway through 2005 Fr David was elevated to the role of pastoral assistant to Bishop Pat and Fr Craig Dunford

was appointed as Northcote's parish priest. At that time there were two priests at Glenfield and three at Northcote.

In 2006 Fr Craig was not happy with the way Maria Assumpta was organising itself and in February he withdrew from the pastoral area arrangement. At a parish meeting in March, at which Bishop Pat presided, he formally relinquished his responsibility as administrator of Maria Assumpta, and said that Northcote clergy would no longer serve the parish.

Bishop Pat said he himself would take over as "acting parish priest" and requested two Dominicans, Frs Paul Rankin and Joe Parkinson, to supply for the remainder of the year. Joan remained as pastoral co-ordinator.

In July that year a group of refugees from Burma (now known as Myanmar) visited the parish. **(See article on page 46)**



Fr Craig

Bishop Gerry Loft

In December 2006 Bishop Pat informed us we were to have a resident parish priest again – this time a bishop. Bishop Gerry Loft, formerly of the Solomons but who had been ministering in the Thames-Coromandel parishes, would be coming for 2007. His sister lived in Takapuna and so it was a good fit. However this meant that Joan would have to move out of the presbytery and get a full-time job, playing thereafter only a part-time role in the parish.



Bishop Gerry

Bishop Gerry duly arrived in late January and was already showing his talents as a handyman, fixing various things around the hall and church.

On Sunday, February 4, 2007, he was officially welcomed into the parish and celebrated his first Masses, followed by a welcome luncheon. Later that afternoon the church alarm went off and he went over to turn it off, but did not know the code.

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This 1973 Christmas fancy dress party was held at the Ratepayers Hall. Parishioners who have been identified are: Standing, Ian Sharkey (Santa Claus), Ray Anderson (fairy, in tutu), Marie Dijkman (Nero, with fiddle) and Pamela Clarke (Spanish Lady). In front, Foss Jury (Willy Winky), John Ryder (Tarzan), Shirley Pereira (Mrs Mopp), Nicky Dijkman (Carmen Miranda), Kay Ryder (Hippie), Anne Anderson (Flapper Girl), Joan Jury (Hippie).



A stylish group of women with hats at the silver jubilee, from left: Pat Lythe, Pat Robinson, Joy Wallace, Joh Cogle, Honor Hurlly, Anne Shaw, Kathleen Sharkey, Anita Knappe and Maryanne Vella.



Monthly men's breakfasts were once a feature of parish life. The men also did an annual breakfast for women of the parish.



A happy silver jubilee group, from left: Peggy Varlow, Patsy Phillips, Jenny Verryt, Glenn Verryt, Anita Knape and Steve Phillips.



The parish council in 2012: from left, Nauru Malaitai, Leontine Atkinson, Anne Shaw, Filomena Filipo, Maria Lafaele, Mathilde Mujawamariya, Andrew May, Beate Matthies, Andrew Gongora, Fr Michael Endemann, Ausage Setu, Emma Ah Kuoi, Ana Tusani and Greg Matheson.



Fr Michael Endemann (far right) leading Christmas carol singing in 2012



This music group was a feature of parish life for many years: From left, Kim Rowe, Trish Barr, Bill Verryt, Brendan Kaufman, Chris Verryt, Glenn Verryt, Helen Molloy and Michelle Kaufman.



Samoan parishioners at the church door with Fr Ikenasio Vitaliano in 2018



Fellowship and food go together at Maria Assumpta, as at this 40th anniversary event in 2012. From left, Patsy Phillips, Suzie McCarthy, Martha Hoani, Fr John Dunn, Fr Michael Endemann, Emma Ah Kuoi, Pat Foster, Sela Capel, Rita Webster, Malingi Mackay, Kathleen Sharkey and Margaret Aull.



Parishioners travelled as a group it was usually on overhead Transport bus. At the door is Sid McCann.



Three Samoan ladies, from left: Tile Alefasio, Miriam Fue and Tenisi Ioane.



The multicultural celebration group in 2018: From left, Andrew Gongora, Beate Matthies, Dave Tusani, Ifo Ah Kuoi, Iulia Naititi, Filomena Filippo, Emma Ah Kuoi, Te Aorere Chan, Ana Tusani and Elizabeth O'Reilly.



Donald Brannigan



Filomena Filipo



Ken Sharkey



Emma Ah Kuoi and Iulia Naititi



Kitchen workers Leativa Poe and Leitioa Mau'u



Paul Lakisoe



Beate Matthies and Stan Minani at a parish fair in 2014



Cedric Tevaga in a 2012 youth re-enactment of the Crucifixion of Jesus



Kalo Palei performing at a 2013 North Shore Samoan Cultural Community event



Parishioners at a parish picnic at Little Shoal Bay in 2012. From left, Suzie Oommen, Andrew Gongora, Te Aorere Chan, Elsa Gongora, Mathilde Mujawamiraya, Egbert Fialho, Catarina Tyler, Fr William Falcao, Beate Matthies and Severina Fialho.

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He rang Joan, who drove down to the parish and as Bishop Gerry was walking towards her across the car park he had a sudden heart attack and dropped dead. What a calamity! For him, for his family, for us, and for Bishop Pat. There were multiple farewell services for him, a vigil in Beach Haven, another in Thames and finally his funeral in Takapuna.

So now what for the parish?

For the first part of 2007 we were back to having supply priests but in April a Sri Lankan priest came to the diocese while he studied for a degree and was posted as administrator to Maria Assumpta. Fr Dharshana Jayamanne stayed for two and a half years before returning to Sri Lanka.



Fr Dharshana

World Youth Day visitors

2008 was a huge year for the diocese and for the parish, with World Youth Day held in Sydney, Australia, in July. Pope Benedict had called for it and it was the first WYD to be held in Oceania. This meant of course that many Kiwi youth could afford to attend.

In the week preceding the main event, many young Catholic pilgrims from around the world spent time in different parts of Australia and New Zealand, staying with a local parish as part of the Days in the Dioceses programme.

Maria Assumpta hosted 40 pilgrims, among them several priests from India. They were billeted in homes and in the presbytery. It was an amazing week with the pilgrims dressing in their national dress for Sunday Mass and a concert with locals and visitors sharing the limelight.

After their stay, they travelled to Sydney for the Opening Mass of the week-long main event, along with some of our own youth.

In October that year parishioner Pat Lythe was created



Dame Pat Lythe with her husband David and Bishop Pat Dunn

a Dame of the Order of St Gregory the Great for services to the Church. Parishioners were invited to the diocesan investiture and Bishop Bob Leamy, SM, came to the parish to present the honour in front of the congregation. She was only the second papal dame in the diocese.

In 2010 Fr Michael Endemann was appointed parish priest. Fr Michael, a Samoan, had been assistant priest at Owairaka for 10 years, and Maria Assumpta was his first posting as a parish priest. He was a contrast to Fr Dharshana, who had been preoccupied with getting a degree and had not been able to fully engage with the parish community.

Fr Michael was revelling in being a parish priest and was very keen to learn how a parish ran, engaging with all the structures and groups in the parish. We had a parish retreat in August.

2011 was designated the Year of Faith by Pope Benedict and a large banner featuring people from around the diocese was commissioned. It included many Maria Assumpta parishioners as well as Fr Michael.

That year the parish participated in the diocesan-wide Church Life Survey which gave a snapshot of parish life. **(See article on page 47)**



Fr Michael

40 years celebrated

The parish celebrated 40 years as a parish from August 17 to 19, 2012, with a booklet containing stories from parishioners and a special multicultural Mass and a dinner.

The multicultural Mass was such a success that the group which planned it determined to hold such a Mass regularly, and it has been a feature of parish life ever since. It means each cultural group in the parish chooses a hymn for the Mass, and the whole parish gets to learn and sing it.

At the diocesan Tu Kahikatea awards for youth, four of our young people, Cedric and Chelsea Tevaga, Joseph Filipino and Christian Setu, received awards, along with Anthony Davids for youth leadership.



Fr Ikenasio

Then at the end of 2012 we got the news that Fr Michael was going to be moved, to become the Samoan chaplain and parish priest of Panmure, which was closer to the Catholic Samoan centre of Malaeola. We were very sad to lose Fr Michael and his karaoke items at all our functions. A large group of parishioners travelled first to Panmure, to “hand him over”, and then to Malaeola to see him installed there.

The last thing he did was to travel with a bus full of 44 Maria Assumpta parishioners in January 2013 to Motuti for the annual Mass remembering Bishop Pompallier’s first Mass. They stayed overnight on the Waipuna marae. For many of those travelling it was their first time on a marae and it was a wonderful experience.

Another Samoan priest

Our new parish priest was Fr Ikenasio Vitaliano, who despite his Italian name was also Samoan.

He had come from Mount Wellington parish, and had served in many other parishes since his ordination in Auckland in 1989. Whereas Fr Michael had been a big man, Fr Ikenasio (known as Ike, pronounced Ikky) was a short, slight man.

Samoans were the largest cultural group in the parish and they were very supportive of Ike who struggled at times. However the fact that there was always a parish pastoral council, a finance committee and willing volunteer secretaries meant the parish thrived.

In July and August 2013 the parish centre was upgraded with a fresh new coat of paint inside, a new floor laid and kitchen and toilet facilities upgraded.

The big event in 2014 was the celebration of Fr Ike's silver jubilee in March, which was marked by a special Mass followed by a dinner.

One of Fr Michael's initiatives was a "Hands Up" homework programme for local school children who needed a quiet place to study, with help offered. It was run by the youth group, led by Chelsea Tevaga. The programme was so popular it had to be moved to a bigger venue than our parish hall. Grahame Russell offered free mobile phone and computer help.

A young woman, Monique Moulton, who had called into the church after being attracted by the singing, went through the RCIA process and was received into the Church at Easter.

The parish hall was a voting venue for the 2014 general election

Housing development completed

In 2016 after years of differing schemes and negotiations, the housing development on former parish land (with four houses for the parish) was completed. **(See article on page 52)**

A special parish meeting was called to determine the fate of the old presbytery. It was decided to offer it as a transitional house to De Paul House for the homeless as an outreach mission endeavour.

Fr Ike became ill and after a series of volunteer parish secretaries, Geraldine, Emma, and Michael, it was agreed



Bishop Pat Dunn presiding at Fr Ikenasio's Requiem Mass



Fr Pio

we could appoint a paid part-time secretary. Fiona Knape was appointed in April 2017. Not only did she carry out secretarial duties but she became Fr Ike's support person during his many visits to doctor and hospital.

Pa Henare Tate died in 2017 and because he had been so instrumental in launching our Maori Miha, which continues every fifth Sunday to this day, parishioners attended his funeral in the Hokianga.



Fr William

Ike's illness, cancer of the throat, worsened and for much of 2018 we had supply priests, with Fr Ike sometimes sitting in the sanctuary, but unable to speak. We had Fr Pio Fong for six months. Fr George Carlos and Fr William Falcao, SDB, also spent much time with us.

Fr Ike came to Sunday Mass on January 31, 2019, and died a day later. His vigil Mass at Maria Assumpta was crowded and his funeral was held at Mangere East in order to accommodate the huge numbers of people who wished to say their farewells to him.



Fr Aleki

Fr Aleki Piula was appointed to take his place as parish priest but was away for the early part of the year. A former Salesian, he had opted to become a diocesan priest and had previously ministered with Fr Michael Endemann at Otara.

He was Tongan but had also served in Samoa, so was

fluent in both languages. He soon picked up the Maori Miha too. He introduced the first Tongan Mass in April of that year. Tongan Manu Bennett was parish secretary.

Covid lockdown

Then in 2020 Covid hit. On March 23 all of the country went into lockdown, Alert Level 4. No gatherings at all, staying home. No Masses, funerals delayed. Auckland was in lockdown for weeks, including Easter. Pat Lythe sent out daily bulletin notices with prayers, parish news and stories about the feast days of saints occurring in that period.

Then Auckland went to Level 2 for a short period, with only 100 people allowed in a gathering. The New Zealand bishops backed the Government's call, saying the system was aimed at protecting the vulnerable.

Our pews were separated by duct tape, so that only every second pew could be used. All masked, no singing, no Communion from the chalice or on the tongue.

In August Auckland again went into Level 3 and seesawed until October. After that vaccine passes were required so people needed to show their passes before being allowed into Mass, and the unvaccinated could have a separate Mass. That second option met with a nil response, and total Mass attendance had dropped sharply.

During these periods, Sunday Mass was broadcast on Shine TV, paid for by the diocese, and Fr Aleki put up Scripture reflections every day on the parish Facebook page. Beate Matthies began Zoom sessions for the young people on a Sunday.

Fortunately we were able to celebrate Christmas, including Midnight Mass, at the end of 2020 but come February 2021 Auckland was again at Alert Level 3 (gatherings of only 10 people allowed).

A new variant, Omicron, was discovered and after a period of time where vaccine passes and social distancing were required, Maria Assumpta marked

In 2020, Marc Theron was appointed parish secretary with oversight of parish operations on a part-time basis. Originally from South Africa, he was not a Catholic but attended Mass with his Catholic wife and family at St Joseph's, Takapuna.

August 15 with one Mass followed by a party afterwards, and two days later came a second lockdown which lasted for Auckland until October. After that Mass could resume but no singing, no processions, masks to be worn, vaccine passes sighted.

A new bishop

On December 18, 2021, came the announcement that Bishop Pat would retire and Bishop Steve Lowe from Hamilton would be the next Bishop of Auckland.

We celebrated Christmas with music at Mass – hooray!

In 2022 a new traffic light system replaced the Covid alert levels – red, orange, and green. For the first part of the year Auckland was at red. Indoor gatherings were capped at 200. That was great for our parish, as we hardly ever had 200 at one service. However masks were to be worn, no singing, Communion only as the host, and no touching during the sign of peace.

The parish also hosted a Covid vaccination event.

On January 2 we were one of the first Auckland parishes to receive the newly commissioned icon of Mary, marking the jubilee year of Mary announced by our bishops.



The icon of Mary

Thirty-four parishioners participated in the synodal discussions taking place nationwide, looking at the future of the Church and where the Holy Spirit is taking us.

Easter was the time when the church was full, for the Easter vigil, Good Friday and Easter Sunday.

It was great to have music back when we went to orange, but cases of Covid started appearing at the Masses, and numbers remained low, as people were still super cautious.

In May the cross on the top of the church suddenly fell down, as the wood holding it to the roof had rotted. It was replaced within two weeks.



Altar cloth symbolises diverse national origins

As part of the silver jubilee celebrations in 1997, and to include all the ethnic groups worshipping in the parish, it was decided to make an altar cloth with the flags of all the nations represented by parishioners.

The Maori border designs were specially chosen. The designs around the top and down the sides are kaitiaki, or a guardian motif, while the one across the bottom is a huitahi design – so that we may be united together as one.

The cloth was made by Anne Anderson.

Originally there were 20 flags incorporated: Australia, Barbados, Cook Islands, Denmark, England, Fiji, Hungary, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Nederland (Holland), New Zealand, New Zealand Maori, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Scotland, South Korea, Tonga, and Western Samoa.

Later nine more were added: Burundi, Germany, India, Indonesia, Karen of Burma, South Africa, Thailand, Vietnam and Zimbabwe.



Anne Anderson

Many parishioners put huge effort into CCD

The apostolate which involved the most people in Maria Assumpta Parish throughout the years was CCD – the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, to give it its full name.

It began in 1968 when Fr Purcell called a special meeting to tell those in the area that the CCD classes at St Mary's, Northcote (run on a Monday night) had more than 111 children from northwest of Verrans Corner and it was time to begin looking at running such classes ourselves.

The following term CCD began, with a full executive committee, 37 drivers, and 10 teachers (seven primary and three secondary). E.E. (Mike) Murphy was the first chairman.

Children were picked up by the drivers from their homes and delivered to the Beach Haven School for the 6.30pm classes and delivered back home again after classes at 7.30pm.

The transport managers were an important part of the enterprise. Later, of course, as drivers saw big cars in the driveways of the houses they picked children up from, they began to ask the question: What about the parents' responsibilities? And the driving slowly petered off.

Home visitors (Mary Woods, Margaret Lavey, Sr Gabrielle and Pat Dixon, among others) visited homes to check whether things were all right when children missed classes, others made visual aids and the whole apostolate involved many people over its 22 years.

As the area did not have a Catholic school, although children were able to attend St Mary's in Northcote, there were always a large number whose faith education, apart from what they received at home, was imparted through CCD.

An annually elected and accountable CCD executive



The 1986 Confirmation group (alias the Holy Mob) with Fr van Tilborg and Bishop Denis Browne

oversaw the running of the whole enterprise. A small fee charged to parents covered most of the expenses.

However probably one of the biggest advantages was the formation in teaching the faith that the classes gave the adults – there is nothing like teaching one's faith to give you greater understanding of it. Over the years more than 150 adults were involved and deepened their faith, and more than 1000 children were grounded in their faith.

The Beach Haven committee continued to hold annual meetings and run CCD until its demise 22 years later.

Figures for the whole area were: Beach Haven, 208 children in classes on Tuesday nights; Northcote, 180 children in classes on Monday nights; Glenfield, 150 in classes on Wednesday nights; Albany/Greenhithe, 50.

Beach Haven's numbers went up to 225 children from 108 families in 13 classes, held from 6-7pm.

Among head teachers were Joan Douglas, Anne Shaw, Jan Ryan, Yvonne Goddard, Pat Lythe, Joan Watt, Suzie Boggs (now McCarthy), Margaret Martin and John Rooney. There was a frequent turnover of teachers because of maternity leave.

At the beginning most classes were too big so there were two classes for every year, plus student teachers. During

1973, Beach Haven School was extensively renovated and CCD had to relocate to St Mary's in Northcote – but thanks to the drivers, the roll remained stable.

However infant classes were held in the old hall before the 9.30am Mass. Philip Rousseau took secondary children for discussion.



Suzie Boggs

In 1975, after an in-parish training course, 10 new teachers were recruited and Janny Mannes was sent later in the year to a CCD course at Palmerston North.

In 1976 the classes changed from Tuesday nights to Sunday mornings and the lesson time shortened from an hour to 45 minutes. It was difficult to get enough drivers to bring the children on weeknights and sports practices were beginning to make an impact. (At this stage Sunday was still sacrosanct, as shops were not open.)

In 1977 the CCD teachers attended a nine-night training course at Carmel College run by Pat Lythe and others on behalf of the North Shore Regional Pastoral Council.

The CCD executive in 1979 was: Chair, Steve Martin; head teacher, Suzie Boggs; home visitors, Pat Dixon and Sr Gabrielle; custodian, Oliver Madden.

That year Mass times were changed (from 10.15am to 10.30am) to accommodate teachers and children coming from classes at Beach Haven School (from 9.15am to 10.00am), as the other time frame was too tight. There were 120 children attending.

In 1979 the diocese decided the name of CCD should be changed to ECL (Education for Christian Living).

By 1982 the number of children had fallen to 67, from 49 families. That year, in an initiative from the young mothers' group, children's liturgy was begun for pre-schoolers by Erica Moore.

In 1983 a combined Easter children's service for all churches was held in the area.

John Rooney was ECL's head teacher in 1984. Other teachers were Tom Pendlebury, Kath Sharkey, Pauline



Head teacher John Rooney



Bible Club in session, with teacher Kim Thomas and Fr van Tilborg

Maney, Frances Verryt, Marie Carswell and Anita Knape.

As numbers fell, ECL classes shifted from Beach Haven School to the parish centre in 1987, thus ending a long and co-operative relationship with the school and its committee.

An ECL Mass and picnic was held at Tui Park in 1988.

In 1989 there were 38 Confirmation candidates and the following First Holy Communion candidates: Lynne Dyer, Mark Greenwell, Jacqueline Harvey, Katherine Hoani, Jessica Hoani, Matthew Hoani, Daniel McKenzie, Nicole Moses, Sidney Pakinga-Williams, Mikaele Sio and Carolyn Walsh.

With only 21 children involved, and attendance erratic, by 1990 ECL was no longer viable. Sunday shopping, sports and a dwindling population were factors.

It was hoped the gap would be filled by a new Bible Club, an after-school initiative of Sr Celine after some parishioners attended Bible training courses. This was held on a Thursday afternoon, incorporating fun, games and music as well as Bible stories and learning texts.

The team running it was: Suzie Boggs, Angela Moore,

In 1986 Maria Assumpta Parish was reputed to have the youngest CCD teacher in the country.

The *New Zealand Tablet* reported that 14-year-old Tristan Corbett took a class of six-year-olds for one hour on Sunday mornings at Beach Haven Primary School.

Patsy Phillips, Malcolm and Robin Steedman and Tessa Lane, later helped by Kim Thomas. This ran successfully until 1994.

Sacramental preparation continued to be run. First Reconciliation and Communion were separate programmes from Confirmation until a diocesan policy change brought about the Sacraments of Initiation preparation for Confirmation, First Reconciliation and First Communion together at the age of reason (seven or thereabouts).

Visit from Myanmar refugees was a treat

In 2006 the parish had a rare treat when it hosted 37 refugees from Myanmar (formerly Burma), who had been at the Mangere resettlement centre. Previously a small number of refugee families from Myanmar had been housed nearby and Mathew, the only Catholic, asked to use the parish hall for a gathering place. This led to closer relationships and others chose to become Catholics. When one of them heard of this new group at the Mangere centre he wanted to show them his “wonderful parish”.

The group arrived on a cold misty morning between the Sunday Masses. Initially bewildered and nervous, mainly because of their limited English, they were soon made comfortable. Parish and refugee children were soon racing round playing tag, language no barrier. The adults engaged in hesitant conversations, telling sad tales of years in refugee camps in Thailand or Malaysia, of families left behind but of their overwhelming joy at being at last accepted into a free country.

“Do you know of our country?” said Teeno, who had been in a camp in Thailand for 10 years, and attached himself to the English speaking volunteers there. “Do you know of the human rights violations?” Assured that there was frequent publicity about it in our news, he was amazed. Members of the group addressed the second



Refugees from Myanmar on their visit to the parish, with Patsy Phillips (at right) making new friends

Mass and spoke of their happiness and joy.

With the local Burmese supplying national dishes for lunch and chatting away to them, and parishioners exchanging phone numbers and details, the visit was a highlight for both the parish and the refugees.

Surveys gave snapshots of our parish life

Maria Assumpta took part in Church Life Surveys in 2011 and 2015, giving a snapshot of the parish at those times.

In 2011, 146 individuals aged 15 and up from both congregations answered the survey.

The 8am Mass had 60% of its attendees over 65, and 44% retired.

The 10am Mass had only 15% over 65, and the same proportion retired. This was a higher proportion than in the other parishes in the diocese and the other churches.

Two thirds of attendees at both Masses were women, the same statistic across the diocese and in the other churches.

The top four ethnic categories were: Pakeha, 8am 62%, 10am 30%; Samoan, 8am 11%, 10am 37%; Tongan, 8am 5%, 10am 12%; Filipino, 8am 8%, 10am 7%.



Ethnic diversity is shown in this 2010 picture of the parish multicultural group

Responses showed we most valued the Eucharist, but not as highly as for other parishes. We valued community dimensions more highly than in many other parishes. Wider community care, praying for one another, practical care for one another and openness to social diversity were high.

Our small parish was rich because we mostly knew one another and were able to care and pray for each other. The greeting, the blessings, the prayer chain, etc, were all building a strong community. We had a strong sense of belonging to this community.

We were not good at reading the Bible on our own or with others. And there was a level of non-involvement both inside the parish and in the wider community, which was higher than in other parishes.

In 2015, 154 parishioners over the age of 15 replied – 60% female, 40% male; 31% were over 65.

The ethnicities (with some mixed) were: Pakeha 46%, Samoan 36%, Filipino 21%, Tongan 8%. Altogether, 58 were born in New Zealand and 96 born elsewhere.

Parishes joined together to pray for the dead

In 2002, three of the North Shore parishes were working closely together in accordance with the diocesan pastoral plan to see how we could become a more unified pastoral area.

A group of leaders from each parish, including the priests, had met together, established relationships and worked out an agreement that we would share resources and ideas. One of the ways we could work together was for the liturgy committees of the three parishes to plan a liturgy together.

Each parish had its own way of doing things and, although we had celebrated one pastoral area Sunday Mass in a school hall, we thought it wiser to plan something none of us had ever had.

We had heard that some parishes in the West had held a combined All Souls service at Waikumete cemetery on All Souls Day. That sounded a good idea. Each parish also had some parishioners from other countries, like the Philippines or Italy, for whom All Souls' day is huge. So we called a meeting of liturgy people from each of the parishes and brainstormed.

First we had to check whether Auckland City would allow us to hold a service in the Schnapper Rock Rd cemetery. After an initial hesitation, the council agreed as long as we did not prevent others from visiting family grave sites.

We thought we would hold it on the Sunday afternoon closest to November 2, so as not to disrupt any of the parish Masses. It would not be a Mass, it would be prayers to reverence and remember the dead.

It would not necessarily require the presence of a priest as we were conscious that priests are frequently tired out by Sunday afternoon. Also at that time, we were facing a shortage of priests, so we wished to be realistic.

We also wished the service to be as inclusive but as general as possible, so that no-one felt excluded, but also no one was singled out. It was a simple order of service, an introduction, an opening hymn, a reading followed by a series of prayers praying for various categories of people – children, family members, friends, colleagues and neighbours, those killed by violence, those who died alone....

To introduce each category, water (symbolising baptism and new life after death) was poured, and a gong was sounded. As a response to each prayer we sang “Eternal rest”. There were enough prayers and roles so that each parish could have participants.

One planning meeting now is all it takes, to work out who will bring the water, the Bible, the orders of service, the gong and the ferns, and to allocate the various roles. Each year it is slightly tweaked.

At the end there are baskets of fern fronds which people are encouraged to dip in the water and take to the graves of families, parishioners and friends. We hold the service in the open in a natural rotunda, and hire a portable sound system for the afternoon.

We did not know whether people would come, but they did – we had about 50 the first time. So we planned it a second time, and now it is an annual event to which all the North Shore parishes are invited and other denominations too.

The numbers grow every year. Many of the clergy come too as part of the group. It has been an extraordinarily moving and powerful ritual.

Many people spend the rest of the afternoon visiting graves, recalling memories of ex-parishioners if they have no family members or friends buried there. For those for whom it is difficult to visit the cemetery on their own, it offers support and solidarity. Some bring food to share following the custom of their home lands.

It is a real communion of saints.



Bill Verryt carrying the cross in the 1999 Good Friday Walk

Good Friday Walk an ecumenical tradition

The popes have given great examples of what we can do to implement ecumenism and to reach out to other denominations. One example is the ecumenical Good Friday Walk in Beach Haven and Birkdale.

It has become a tradition: Beach Haven and Birkdale Christians have been walking together on Good Friday for 15 years. Some Maria Assumpta parishioners started it (spearheaded by Malcolm Steedman) and more than 150 Christians of different denominations take part.

Starting at the Methodist church, the pilgrims stop at the Anglican church and the Catholic church before walking up the hill to the Coptic church, continuing to the Cross Road and Grace Revival churches and concluding the walk at the Baptist church. At each church the hosting priest, minister or parishioner reads from the Bible and gives a short reflection on it.

A big wooden cross is carried in turn from station to station by individuals of the different Christian churches, followed by pilgrims of different age groups, ethnic groups and denominations. Between the stations there is time for personal encounter and at the hosting church there is the time to share the readings with each other.

Developing parish land was a prolonged process

Bishop Liston bought the land where the church stands in 1950 from Frank and Marie Costello (Sharron Peters' aunt and uncle), who had farmed it. It was for the use of a future parish and the intention was for a primary school to be built alongside a church, but the Education Department would not allow a school as there were already four in the vicinity.

After the church was built, a house was still on the property and was used as a parish centre. Red and Joan Cory leased the land behind the house and grew flowers for the market, also supplying the parish.

Following a successful pledge campaign, suggestions were made about expanding the buildings, moving and increasing the size of the church, and building a parish centre. One fundraising project was the planting of pine trees on the land to sell as Christmas trees. Planting began in 1977 and many were sold in 1979, 1980 and 1981.

The parish hall was opened in 1979 after the old house was demolished. In 1982 the parish Scout den was put on the site after a "Rangatira" scout group was established. The rest of the land was leased to horse owners for grazing, and used by several Labour Department work schemes (one of them the Oruamo project).

Two garages between the presbytery and the hall were used for storing parish equipment such as lawn mowers, and Christmas and Easter accessories.

In 1988 the parish proposed to housing minister Helen Clark that the land – a rectangular block about 103 metres by 77 metres with driveway access west of the Scout den – be used for welfare housing, but nothing came of it. Meanwhile the remaining pine trees grew taller and taller.

Other uses considered included community use (e.g.



Where once were tall trees, there is now a housing development

drop-in centre), commercial development, hospice, medical, rest home, and youth resource centre, but all these were either covered in the Beach Haven area or beyond the capabilities of the parish to finance or operate.

Two further options were left – to sell the land or use it for housing. The idea of selling the land raised vehement objections from some parishioners. It would bring immediate cash but not provide income or benefit to future generations of parishioners.

Several “developments” were investigated but none proceeded, due mainly to inability to get the necessary financial backing. One developer wanted to build a retirement village on a 150-year lease.

Eventually, as the parish struggled financially, it was decided to try to do something which would bring an income or allow building a bigger church.

In 2009 Father Dharshana Jayamanne appointed a property committee of Tony Cavit, Joh Cogle and Anne Shaw to tackle the question. Tom Cotter was later added, and Anne Shaw stood down due to work commitments.

The committee approached real estate agents, developers and a charitable housing group. At parish meetings,

differing views were expressed: keep the land; sell part or all of it, lease it. What would happen to the income? Would the diocese take it? Could we develop it ourselves for needy parishioners or community?

Finally a parish meeting narrowly approved a scheme whereby a developer would build 19 houses on the land and, in return, the parish would receive four of them. One house would be on parish land, the other three on the developer's land. The priest would live in the one on parish land, accessed by the parish driveway, and the other three would be accessed by the west driveway, renamed Marie Costello Way.



Joh Cogle

The rent from the three houses would provide an income for the parish, after rates and management fees were deducted.

Work began in 2015 and after several delays the houses were completed and handed over to the parish at the end of 2016. A body corporate was set up with one seat for Maria Assumpta, an outside manager contracted, and Fr Ikenasio Vitaliano moved into the priest's house.

Containers were moved to the west side of the remaining piece of church land. These store St Vincent de Paul provisions and parish equipment.

The old presbytery was left vacant. Options put to a special parish meeting were: keep it as a venue for youth and other parish groups, or offer it to De Paul House as a transitional house for the homeless. The latter proposal passed by a slim majority. So far the house has hosted 18 families (26 adults and 59 children) as part of Maria Assumpta's missionary outreach.

Throughout these long protracted proposals, negotiations and special parish meetings, a group of dedicated parishioners on the land or finance committees have worked long hours – Tom Cotter, Tony Cavit, Michael O'Reilly and Joh Cogle in particular, while PPC chairs also played a role.

Samoan group active since 1980

The North Shore Samoan Catholic Community (NSSCC), based at Maria Assumpta, was established in 1980. Most of its founders were from key families (Fue, Pereira, Stewart and Visesio) who have dedicated many years to the parish.

NSSCC meets every fourth Sunday after the 10am Mass with a shared lunch, and on each first Sunday of November celebrates the All Souls feast day with other parishioners. The Samoan community also celebrates a Samoan Mass every second Sunday of the month.

Samoan parishioners recognise the contribution of each ethnic group and the significance of incorporating multicultural values as a way to bring parishioners together to serve and praise the Lord.

Enua Ola group promotes health

Enuu Ola is a church/community based programme for health promotion and early intervention. It promotes wellbeing, smoke-free communities and less obesity in Pacific communities.

There are 10 funded EO communities on the North Shore. Every year each group applies for funding to coordinate fitness and wellbeing, utilising community action in a comfortable environment. The MA group has run an exercise programme (Zumba) on Tuesdays at 6pm since 2009.

Each year there is an Aiga Challenge, which is a weight-loss competition. MA members have done water aerobics, walking, nutritional breakfasting and body weight sessions. Each member sets additional physical activities to do. In 2019 MAEO won the Wild Card trophy for nutrition.

Those involved with the group have included Fr Michael Endemann, Sesalina Setu, Miriama Malaitai and Maligi McKay. The current committee is Maria Lafaele, Ifo Ah Kuoi, Pina Naititi and Fono Iakopo.



Sesalina Setu



Maria Lafaele

MAYA – a vibrant outlet for youth activities



Grahame Russell

The parish gained a stronghold in diocesan youth groups when Grahame Russell established Maria Assumpta Young Adultz in 2005. MAYA was initially formed from young parishioners attending the North Shore Youth Mass at St Mary's, Northcote. Founding youth came from the Dwe, Tapili, Tevaga, Filipo, Petelo, Luisilva and Solomon families.

Grahame's enthusiasm inspired regular catchups for Bible studies, neighbourhood walks and bbqs. Eventually MAYA led monthly youth Masses, providing uplifting experiences for the parish with the help and direction of Lyn and Derrick Solomon. Youth leadership was vital, with Chelsea Tevaga as male youth leader and Cicilia Dwe as female youth leader.



Chelsea Tevaga

The first project was t-shirt uniforms boasting a distinctive blue colour with a cross and palm logo at the front, and the full MAYA name at the back. Funding was secured in a matter of days and the uniforms helped cement the group's permanence on the parish and diocesan landscape. Opportunities for spiritual growth through retreats and Friday fun nights saw MAYA's numbers and influence grow.

The World Youth Day 2008 Sydney event led to an intensive fundraising campaign of weekend sausage sizzles, fiafia (entertainment) nights, high tea, raffle sales and services to parishioners for a donation. Maria Assumpta sent its first ever WYD contingent of eight young people with two parent chaperones.

As original members moved on to further study or work, new leaders and members carried the mantle. MAYA's success was built on providing an outlet for activities and networking as members came from families with limited means to support extracurricular activities. Another crucial element was support by parents who rallied to supervise, transport and source opportunities for the youth to thrive and achieve their goals.

Parishioners active in service outside parish

Maria Assumpta Parish has always had parishioners involved in Church activities beyond parish boundaries. For many years there has been one or more parishioners working at Pompallier Diocesan Centre.

Since the North Shore Regional Pastoral Council began in 1974, Maria Assumpta is the only parish to have had continued representation. This has been of great value, as diocesan and regional news has been communicated, and resources shared widely.

Many regional reps have gone on to the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the bishop's council.

Pat Lythe was elected from the North Shore region to the DPC in 1976, become its first woman chair in 1979-80, and remained on the council as a member of the newly formed National Laity Commission.

Pat served a second term as chair, 1989-90, and in 1992 took up the role of co-ordinator of evangelisation in the diocese and executive secretary of the DPC.

She was also chosen to represent New Zealand at the lay consultation in Rome prior to the Bishops' Synod on the Laity in 1987. In the 1990s she was co-chair of the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Pat was leader of the diocesan pastoral services team until she retired at the end of 2018.

In 1984 **Anne Shaw** was elected as the North Shore rep and in 1987 **Joan Wells** was elected to represent the North Shore parishes. She remained on for seven years, and **Ralph Moore** served from 1993 until 1996.

While Anne was on the DPC, she became a member of the diocesan planning group in charge of logistics and involved a huge number of Beach Haven parishioners in making signs and name plates and in shifting furniture and generally making themselves useful.



Pat Lythe



Anne Shaw



Anita Knape



Bill Verryt



Jenny Verryt



Chris Verryt



Kath Sharkey



Bill Kilgallon

Anita Knape served two terms on the DPC from 1997. **Ausage Setu** was the Samoan rep in 2016-17.

The Beginning Experience ministry for those suffering the grief of broken marriage or death of a spouse has had many parishioners take part in its weekends and some have become members of the BE team.

Joan Wells was chair of the Auckland board of BE, and New Zealand regional rep on the Asia Pacific board. Two other parishioners, **Jill** and **Paul Davenport**, both served on the Auckland executive, Paul as president. Jill was elected chair of the Asia-Pacific board.

Suzie Boggs (now McCarthy) and **Pat Lythe** were members of the evangelisation working party which developed, wrote and presented the small-group programme Go Now! **Bill Verryt** designed the logo.

Bernette Peters, **Val Phillips** and **Peter Carswell** all served in youth ministry leadership roles: Bernette on the Marist Retreat team, Val in diocesan youth ministry and Peter as youth co-ordinator. **Bill** and **Jenny Verryt** served on the diocesan youth advisory group.

David Sharkey did three terms of overseas service with Catholic Overseas Volunteer Service – two in Papua New Guinea and one doing relief work in Samoa after a cyclone. **Tony Cameron** and his wife **Maria** also served with COVS, and Tony became the director of COVS after being executive officer for the diocesan justice and peace commission.

Chris Verryt volunteered with the Mt Tabor Trust, a group including people with intellectual disabilities.



David Sharkey on overseas service

Delia Ruane worked for the diocese in grief support, running the sacramental programmes in the religious education team, and with Beginning Experience.



Delia Ruane

Oommen Kuriakose was in the finance section of the diocesan administration.

Kath Sharkey was co-ordinator of the Auckland Faith and Light community, part of an international Christian network for people with intellectual disabilities.

Suzie McCarthy worked for Catholic Communications and *NZ Catholic* and is currently with the Tribunal of the Catholic Church.

Bill Kilgallon was national director of the Office for Professional Standards and served on the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors.

Mathilde Mujawamariya, herself a former refugee (her home country is Burundi), has volunteered with Refugee and Migrant Services and also the Red Cross.



**Mathilde
Mujawamariya**

Beate Matthies has taken on a host of activities outside the parish. She was Auckland regional co-ordinator for Caritas Aotearoa NZ, general manager of Te Ngakau Waiora Mercy Spirituality Centre, and is now operations and finance manager for East Coast Bays parish. She is the Catholic representative on the Auckland Interfaith Council and Auckland representative on the Catholic Bishops Committee for Interfaith Relations. She also runs the Muffin Talk radio programme and the Titipounamu Study & Joy website.



Beate Matthies

Suzie and Pat McCarthy were founding members of the New Zealand group of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem, have organised several Holy Land pilgrimages and are involved in a refugee resettlement project.

Maria Assumpta has had an unusually high number of parishioners with leadership roles in Catholic media:

Gary Merrylees was production manager of *Zealandia*, **Michael Fitzsimons** was editor of *Zealandia*, **Pat McCarthy** was founding editor of *NZ Catholic*, and **Peter Grace** was also editor of *NZ Catholic*.

Artisans in the sanctuary



Barbara Simpson

The sanctuary of our Maria Assumpta Church has been graced by the work of many of our artisans.

Altar cloths: Barbara Simpson (now Hancock) and Anne Anderson designed and made most of the frontal and lectern altar cloths in the church. They are designed to be in tune with the liturgical seasons or the feasts. The parish is so fortunate to have had these two wonderful machinists. We used to have the names of those receiving sacraments sewn on to the frontal altar cloth.

Anne also designed and made the multi-cultural altar cloth used for the multicultural Masses and St Peter Chanel feast day



Ifo Ah Kuoi

Flowers: From Jimmie Merz, through Anne Anderson to Ifo Ah Kuoi, the parish has been blessed to have these artistic flower arrangers. Anne designed and collected a whole liturgical year's groupings of artificial silk flowers when real flowers were very expensive. Ifo now chooses to use real flowers.

One-offs: Barry Smith designed and built the altar, the canopy over it and the ambo. He made the candlesticks which stand either side of the ambo and did the woodwork around the church interior.

Bruce Douglas and David Sharkey designed and installed the handrails up to the altar on the back wall.

David Sharkey sources and installs the palms for Palm Sunday. Patsy Phillips used to erect and decorate the Christmas tree. Bill Verryt used wood from the former Costello house/parish centre to carve a nativity set.

Tabernacle: The original tabernacle lasted 49 years but the lock was broken and unable to be fixed, so when the church at Belmont was closed in 2021, we were able to obtain its tabernacle, the golden one, with shelving adjusted by David Sharkey.



Golden tabernacle for a golden jubilee

Parish priests, pastoral workers, chairpersons

PARISH PRIESTS

Fr Harry Jillings (1972-73)
Fr Frank McHale (1973-74)
Fr Bill Jordan (1975-76)
Fr Nick Alleman (1976-78)
Fr Ivan Lunjevich (1978-82)
Fr Jim Shanahan (relieving, 1981)
Fr John van Tilborg (1982-1993)
Fr Chris Brady (1993-95)
Fr Michael Gormly (1995)
Fr John Dunn (1995-2003)
Fr David Tonks (2004-05, from Northcote, sharing with Fr John Bland)
Fr Craig Dunford (2006, administrator, from Northcote)
Bishop Gerry Loft, SM (2007)
Fr Dharshana Jayamanne (2007-09, administrator)
Fr Michael Endemann (2010-12)
Fr Ikenasio Vitaliano (2013-18)
Fr Aleki Piula (2019-)

PASTORAL WORKERS

Sr Gabrielle Whiteley, DC (1978-82)
Sr Olive Mangan, DC (1982-83)
Sr Celine Quadros, DC (1983-86)
Sr Val Cullen, DC (from Northcote, 1986-89)
Sr Helena Hotchin, RSM (1989-90)
Sr Celine Sinclair, SM (1990-96)

PARISH COUNCIL CHAIRPERSONS

John Ryan (March 1966-August 1968, *steering committee only*)
Barry Smith (1968-1969, *Beach Haven area council*)
Cliff Money (1969-70)
Ian Sharkey (1970-71)
Parish pastoral council:
John Ryan (1971-73)
Barry Hailes (May-August 1973)
Trevor Clarke (1973-75)
Arthur Rutter (1975-79)
Ralph Moore (1979-81)
Pat Lythe (1981-83)
Jim Brock (1983-84)
Joan Wells (1984-86)
Clinton Ridling (1986-88)
Rex Corbett (1988-90)
Malcolm Steedman (1990-91)
Anne Shaw (1991-93)
Fred Aull (1993-95)
Anita Knape (1995-97)
David Reid (1997-98)
Joan Wells (1998-2000)
Michael O'Reilly (2000-02)
John Rooney (2002-05)
Anita Knape (2005-07)
Malcolm Steedman (2007-08)
Sesalina Setu (2008-10)
Peter Tevaga (2010-11)
Greg Matheson (2011-12)
Beate Matthies (2012 -15)
Sesalina Setu (2016-17)
Chelsea Tevaga/Joh Cogle (2018)
Bill Kilgallon (2019-)

CREDITS: Text by Pat Lythe, editing and design by Pat McCarthy, printing by Inkprint. Photos from parish collection and from parishioners (Beate Matthies in particular), Auckland Diocesan Archives, *NZ Catholic* and St Columbans Mission Society.



The name of Maria Assumpta Parish celebrates the Assumption of Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. This is the belief that Mary's body and soul were "assumed" into heaven, instead of going through the natural process of physical decay after death. Though the Assumption is one of the oldest Marian feast days, it was proclaimed a dogma of the Catholic Church only in 1950. The feast of the Assumption is on August 15.